



News Release

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NEW TAX SCAMS SURFACE

WASHINGTON – Although the federal tax filing season ended on April 15, the Internal Revenue Service continues to see new tax scams. Two new schemes target families of those serving in the Armed Forces and e-mail users. In both schemes, people represent themselves as being from the IRS.

The IRS has seen isolated instances of the scam that targets the families of those serving in the Armed Forces.

The IRS warns consumers to beware of any variation of a scenario in which a telephone caller posing as an IRS employee tells a family member that he is entitled to a \$4,000 refund because his relative is in the Armed Forces and then requests a credit card number to cover a \$42 fee for postage. The scammer provides an actual IRS toll-free number as the call back number in order to make the call seem legitimate. However, the scammer then makes numerous unauthorized purchases with the victim's credit card number.

Genuine IRS employees who call taxpayers do not ask for credit card numbers or request fees for payment of a refund.

"Tax season may be over, but tax scams continue," said IRS Commissioner Mark Everson. "These types of shameless schemes hold out the allure of easy money. The IRS warns taxpayers to be on the lookout for these schemes. And we urge taxpayers to remember that the IRS does not charge for refunds or solicit credit card information."

In another scheme, victims receive an e-mail that appears to be from the IRS. The e-mail contains links to a non-IRS Internet Web page that asks for personal and financial information. Such information could be used to steal the respondent's identity and get access to sensitive financial data or accounts.

Identity thieves can use someone's personal data to:

- take over his or her financial accounts,
- run up charges on the victim's existing credit cards,
- apply for loans, credit cards, services or benefits in the victim's name, or
- file fraudulent tax returns.

The IRS does not request sensitive personal or financial data by e-mail.

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Both of these schemes are being reviewed by the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration, which is authorized to investigate the misuse of the IRS name, insignia, seals and symbols.

Taxpayers who are on the receiving end of one of these scams should contact TIGTA by calling the toll-free fraud referral hotline at 1-800-366-4484, faxing a complaint to 202-927-7018 or writing to the TIGTA Hotline, P.O. Box 589, Ben Franklin Station, Washington, D.C. 20044-0589. TIGTA's Web site is located at www.ustreas.gov/tigta.

These are hardly the first scams involving impersonation of an IRS employee or misuse of the IRS name.

In the past, scammers have impersonated IRS agents by going to taxpayers' houses to "collect taxes." Genuine IRS special agents, field auditors, and collection officers carry picture IDs and will normally try to contact the taxpayer before they visit.

In another scam, the scheme promoters sent out fictitious bank correspondence and phony IRS forms in an attempt to trick the recipients into disclosing their personal and banking data. The scheme promoters then used the information to impersonate the taxpayer and gain access to the taxpayer's finances.

Genuine IRS forms do not ask for sensitive personal and financial data except in very special circumstances.

Additional information on tax scams may be found on the genuine IRS Web site, IRS.gov, by going to The Newsroom page and then clicking on the "Scams/Consumer Alerts" link under the Topics sidebar.

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